

**Remarks as delivered by ADM Gary Roughead
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Well, Mr. Secretary, thank you for those very kind and generous words. Secretary Ball, Mr. Dix, General Conway. One thing, Jim, you can always take to the bank: I will be alongside all the time whenever you need me.

Admiral Gay, thank you for this ceremony. It is a great way to begin a tour as the CNO, and welcome to all in the audience today -- colleagues, shipmates and friends from over the years. I'm grateful for the confidence that has been placed in me by President Bush, Secretary Gates, Secretary Winter and Admiral Mike Mullen, and I would be remiss if I did not thank Mike Mullen for all he has done, for his great service over the years and most recently for two years of extraordinary leadership of the United States Navy.

On behalf of all who serve in the Navy, we wish him and Deborah every success as the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

And I'm most especially thankful for Ellen and our daughter, Elizabeth. Four commands in four years -- had we done this a week ago, I would have said five in four years. I couldn't have done it without you, Ellen, and I would not have wanted to do it without you.

But I'm excited to be the CNO, and I'm honored and humbled and reminded by this setting of the scope and sweep of the task ahead. There is a rich heritage here in the Navy yard. For more than two centuries, this yard has seen its fair share of activity and has served as a center for technological innovation.

From its destruction to avoid capture by the British in the War of 1812 to the manufacturing of armaments and munitions used in every conflict from 1886 to 1960, it has served. Naval aviation took a quantum leap forward when they built a test catapult out here on the Anacostia River in 1912, and a wind tunnel was built here in 1916. Even maritime commerce today is served and benefits from what was done in this yard long ago because the gears for the Panama Canal locks were manufactured where we are today, and those gears still open the doors between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans.

But much has changed since then and since I was an ensign. And I was not here for a lot of the things that I just spoke about. But in my early days I do remember how we were pressing the technological limits, and that seems very primitive today. F-14s were coming on line then -- they're all gone now -- and now it's our sailors who are coming on line.

Tracking and shooting things in space from a destroyer is something that I never believed would happen in my lifetime and in my career, but I've seen it, and more importantly, I have done it. Z-grams was the way that the CNO communicated with the sailors, and now we do it with

podcasts. And commanding a mixed-gender ship was not a privilege that I thought I would have in my career, but I did.

But the one thing that hasn't changed is the centrality of the American sailor, who remain the face of sea power around the world. From our operations in the Middle East, the combat operations that we're conducting there, to Valiant Shield in the Pacific, to Global Fleet Stations, to Pacific Partnership, the Partnership of the Americas, the Mercy and the Comfort deployments, and our riverine and individual augmentees, who are doing great work in Iraq, they all represent a new dimension of our Navy, a dimension in which we can all take pride.

We are truly a ready and agile and a global Navy. It's an exciting time to serve, and I'm proud and eager to lead this Navy. My priorities have been and always will be maintaining our current war-fighting readiness, building a Navy for tomorrow and providing for our people -- our sailors, our civilian employees, and our very special families, whose hallmark is sacrifice and self-reliance.

But we can't get to the future if we can't assure the present, and that is why war-fighting readiness is so important to me and so vital to our Navy. Our carrier and our expeditionary strike groups, along with our submarines, will remain unmatched and the cornerstone of our blue-water Navy and our nation's global force, ready any time, anywhere. Our role in providing combat-ready, forward-deployed forces to fulfill our commitments to the joint force and to our allies will not change. In fact, our role is increasing, especially in regions where we have not routinely operated: South America and Africa.

We live in a changing security environment, and we cannot afford to rest on our laurels and expect to achieve future success. Our ships, our submarines, our aircraft, our networks, our weapon systems must stay ahead of potential adversaries. The cost of future systems and the speed of technological innovation will challenge our ability to deliver a balanced force. Therefore, we must be exacting in our requirements, mindful of the factors that increase costs, disciplined in our process to be effective and efficient, and timely in delivering future capability while simultaneously maintaining our current readiness.

I know this is easier said than done, but together we are going to make that happen. And people are the key. All we acquire and all we do is of little worth without the people who give it value. Our policies must reflect the diversity of our nation. Our policies and practices must enable us to attract, recruit and retain the men and women of America. Our policies must address the many rewards of service in the United States Navy. And we must be unwavering in our obligation to take care of those who serve our Navy -- military and civilian -- and their families.

We are an engaged Navy in the Middle East and in the Western Pacific to be sure, but today we are involved in several global maritime partnerships, and these partnerships promote understanding and build trust while always representing and always being mindful of the sovereignty of each nation with whom we work.

The high-speed vessel, Swift, is part of a global fleet station in the Caribbean. This month the amphibious ship, USS Fort McHenry, will take up that initiative in the Gulf of Guinea on the west coast of Africa. The hospital ship, Comfort, is heading home after four months of a

tremendously successful deployment in Latin America, and in fact, I will visit her tomorrow as she passes by the coast of Florida. Comfort's contributions to the well-being of thousands in Central and South America has made a difference. Mothers will never forget the healing of their child, and those children have been spared the bleak future of cleft palates, disfigured limbs and clouded eyesight. Comfort and Mercy made a powerful statement and showed the benevolence of our nation and the role that the United States Navy plays as a force for good and stability in our world.

You know, I really am a fortunate man to have the love and support of the loves of life, Ellen and Elizabeth, to be able to serve in the United States Navy, and in so doing work with true patriots who selflessly serve our nation. And at the top of that list is Secretary Winter. His leadership is decisive, inspirational and compelling. We face many challenges, but I have seen and have witnessed -- and it is the Navy's good fortune -- that he takes the tough issues head-on, he does the right thing, and he makes the tough choices.

Mr. Secretary, I look forward to working with you in building the Navy of tomorrow.

And I'm also fortunate to lead the Navy at this time. There is much change about, and I welcome that change. I see opportunity there, and we will seize those opportunities. But we are not alone. Two years ago, I attended the International Sea Power Symposium in Newport, Rhode Island. There were about 60 countries represented. Next week, we return to Newport for the 18th International Sea Power Symposium, and this time there will be over 100 countries represented in Newport.

Why the increase? I believe it is because more nations see the need, the imperative, for sea power. They see that security and prosperity depend on the free flow of commerce on the world's oceans. They see that one nation does not do it alone. They see that cooperation is better than confrontation.

It is fitting, therefore, that next week the commandant of the Marine Corps, the commandant of the Coast Guard and I will present our new maritime strategy to those naval leaders. It's a strategy that affirms the strength of our Navy, our Marine Corps and our Coast Guard, that affirms our global view, that balances the high end of sea power with what others may call the soft , and it commits us to working with partners around the world as a force for peace.

I'm optimistic about the course that we are steering, and I remain inspired by those who serve in our great Navy. I find promises in the bridges of trust that we are building at sea among those who see a better world because of what we are able to do collectively. And I look forward to it all.

Thank you very much.